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Rating:	Mature
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Category:	F/F, F/M, M/M
Fandom:	Super Smash Brothers, Fire Emblem Series, Fire Emblem: Kakusei | Fire Emblem: Awakening, Xenoblade Chronicles, The Legend of Zelda & Related Fandoms, The Legend of Zelda: Hyrule Warriors, 光神話 | Kid Icarus (Video Games), 新・光神話 パルテナの鏡 | Kid Icarus: Uprising (Video Game)
Relationship:	Male My Unit/Shulk, Henry/Female My Unit | Female Avatar/Henry, Chrom/Olivia, Lucina/Dark Pit, Samus Aran/Little Mac, Marth/Shulk, Male My Unit/Cia, Ike (Fire Emblem)/Pit (Kid Icarus), Link/Zelda (Legend of Zelda), Male My Unit/Shulk/Cia, Male My Unit/Shulk/Marth, Marth/Roy, Lucina/Cia, Ganondorf/Palutena, Alvis/Rosalina, Magnus/Dunban
Character:	Male My Unit | Avatar, Female My Unit | Avatar, Chrom (Fire Emblem), Shulk, Pit (Kid Icarus), Dark Pit (Kid Icarus), Lucina (Fire Emblem), Ike (Fire Emblem), Marth (Fire Emblem), Little Mac, Samus Aran, Link (Legend of Zelda), Zelda (Legend of Zelda), Olivia (Fire Emblem), Henry (Fire Emblem), Cia (Legend of Zelda), Lana (Legend of Zelda), Roy (Fire Emblem), Brewster (Animal Crossing), Villager (Animal Crossing), Magnus, Dunban, Alvis (Xenoblade Chronicles), Princess Rosalina
Additional Tags:	Romance, Hurt/Comfort, AU, Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, Drama, Friendship/Love, Falling In Love, Love Triangles, Love Confessions, Emotional Hurt/Comfort, Hate to Love, Love, Crossover Pairings, Jealousy, Sibling Rivalry, Heterosexual Sex, Male Slash, Emotional Manipulation, Cheating, Implied/Referenced Child Abuse, Implied/Referenced Self-Harm, Implied/Referenced Suicide, Mental Health Issues, Female Slash, Online Dating, Flashbacks, Revenge, Implied/Referenced Molestation, Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con, Abusive Parents
Stats:	Published: 2015-05-01 Updated: 2015-09-23 Chapters: 4/? Words: 18068

Honey and the Bee

by Ignitious

Summary

(AU) Deciding her brother's life to be rather dull and meaningless, the prodigal Robin decides on a whim to set him up an dating profile without his consent. Prior to her knowledge, Rob's stuck in an internal battle of his own conflicts to include feelings of

remorse, regret to even the darkest desires. What happens when all the sudden two important people from his past start show up in his life once more in the seaside town of Esultare? Furthermore, they mean the entire world to him as his feelings now go through another battle in addition with his own conflicts, the struggle of loving two people at once.

Notes

This idea originally intended to be an oneshot for Smash Comedy Month however due to be being extremely busy during the month of April, I couldn't make it in time nor participate in the month itself. Luckily, I decided that I loved this idea so much to roll work it. Second, I'm using this as an excuse to write and experiment with an possibly new pairing I fell in love with and to my dismay, it's unfortunately in an story which isn't written seriously so being the stubborn girl that I am, I had to take initiative and write it myself in a way in which both can be mainly in character(more like trying my best) rather than just wacky caricatures.

I heavily blame MerchantAnna and GeneralDarkPit both for the Male!Robin/Cia pairing that's in The Hot Topic Krew out of all things. Just kidding, that story itself is an wild ride if you want an good laugh while reading something that gives off an Tails Gets Trolled kind of vibe.

The story title itself is questioning as I am still trying to decide on Honey and the Bee(named after an Owl City song), To The Lighthouse(named after an Memoryhouse song) or The Story Ain't Tragic(named after an Houlden Caulfield song).

Please note that depending on how you interpret characters, especially in an AU compared to me, they may or may not be slightly OOC. I just have this weird tendency to write characters as humans, especially for AUs for some reason. It helps me dive into their minds more.

Can't wait for this to take off and progress, even more have an darker turn because for some reason, I love applying some human nature to relationships.

Note that I will update the tags as I go along but that will most likely just be character tags and the additional(with the more common themes and characters on both). In addition to this, I'm putting the archive warnings up as well even though it won't be until way later just to be safe. When scenes that can be considered triggering do come up, I will put an warning in the middle of the story as well as when it ends.

For future reference, catfish(verb): someone luring someone else into a relationship by means of a fictional online persona. Can also include those pretending to be an different age, etc. as well.

esultare(noun): means glory in Italian. The town's name is an pun based off of For Glory mode in Smash.

Her Devious Ploy

"Are you really sure about this? I mean, what if he finds out!"

"He's not going to find out Chrom, trust me."

Robin's eyes were glued to the dim light of the computer as she frantically typed up the final details. The snow haired woman moved her right hand, placing it over her lips as her dark brown eyes scanned through the information on the screen, making sure everything was exactly on key point. She began tapping the left side of her cheek, taking a deep breath before moving the cursor over the next button to proceed.

Chrom hovered over, standing behind the computer chair as he observed her every move, double checking to make sure every small detail Robin imputed was accurate. As the two progressed through the website, they finally made it to the fun part in which both beamed a bit in delight.

"Oh fun, we get to create a profile picture for him Chrom! Isn't this quite exciting?!" Robin beamed, imagining all the amusing combinations she could conjure up.

The indigo haired man chuckled, his lips curling in uttermost excitement as Robin uploaded a picture of a bronze, muscular body builder flexing his arms while showcasing his six-pack he worked hard for. Next, she hastily clicked on the editing program the website provided for their users as she tried her best to compress her giggling. Chrom watched her construct the most absurd masterpiece the gifted prodigy ever created, let alone thought up. When the finish product came to a close, the muscular body builder now donned a cute, cartoon cat head with a rainbow behind it to include hearts and sparkles along with some pink decorative font found in a purikura machine.

"Robin, I've seen you do some ridiculous things before but this one definitely takes the icing off the cake," Chrom stated a-matter-of factly. He glanced at the creative product once more, snickering every time he observed the cat's head on the toned man's body. The man did have to admit, Robin was quite the artist when it came to exhibiting her exotic masterpieces, let alone toying around with Photoshop when bored. Chrom took a deep breath for a moment as he began to recollect his thoughts, pondering why Robin thought of signing her brother up on a dating website, especially without his consent.

"So, Robin?" he asked, wanting to reassure his suspicions. "Why is it exactly are you signing Rob up for a dating website again, especially without notifying him first? I mean, shouldn't you have at least asked him if he was at least interested or not. This whole ordeal will only lead to someone having a broken heart and that person definitely is not going to be your brother, that's for sure."

The young woman sighed in response, shaking her head in disappointment as she turned to face the blue haired man behind her.

"Chrom, just take one good look at my twin brother and you'll know why I'm making this profile. Rob's been a lonely loser for how long now? Besides, think about it, he's a sapless guy doing the same thing day in and day out and even better, a bunch of other washed up weirdoes are on dating sites all the time. It will be the perfect match! After all, Rob's a socially inept guy, the strange dud he meets is socially awkward, bingo! You've got a match made in heaven!" Robin roared, fist pumping as if she was a hundred percent correct.

Chrom, however decided to put down her statement. After all, it was quite rude to generalize, in addition to, insult people for using the internet as a outlet for dating. Second, Rob was far from being socially inept. Sure he may be that kind of guy who kept to himself and only said a word

when it's necessary, yet that doesn't mean he couldn't present when spoken to, let alone requested to give public speeches on the behalf of his instructors.

"Um, Robin, I think you're thinking too far ahead and to correct you, your brother is far from being socially inept let alone non-social. Next, I personally am not fond of those who condemn dating sites, let alone mock those who find them easier than engaging face-to face. Of course, this doesn't include all the catfishing that happens but you would think people would catch on to those performing that by now," he said, narrowing her brow in her direction.

The girl gave a disgruntled huff, rolling her eyes in response as she turned her back towards him, her eyes once again glued to the computer screen in front of her. She once again clicked proceed as she now got to choose her brother's preferences, including who he wishes to seek, interests, and last but not least a simple and to the point biography about himself.

"I am a man interested in A) Men, B) Women or C) Both Men and Women," she read out loud, hinting the obvious in which she requested Chrom's advice.

"Last time I recalled, Rob's bisexual, so I would definitely click C," he responded.

"Next option is his interests in which if I can recall correctly, he's into classical literature, strategy games, poetry slams, and last but not least, speech and debate," Robin stated, proceeding on. She typed as she went along, adding some of his favorite novels which varied from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to *The Great Gatsby* by Scott F. Fitzgerald.

"What about *The Lord of the Rings*? Isn't Rob a huge fan of the Hobbit series?" Chrom brought up, trying to remember everything about his closest friend.

"Nah, surprisingly he was never that big into Tolkien. That was always more of my interest anyways," Robin flatly stated, journeying her way into inserting her twin's favorite music artists.

"Fuck, Chrom? What does Rob listen to again? I forgot," the woman questioned, a bit devastated she couldn't recall any of her brother's favorite musicians.

"If I'm not mistaken, he listens to what Pit loves dubbing as hipster shit," he replied, listening a couple of artists ranging from Washed Out, The Radio Dept. to even Memoryhouse.

"Got it! Finally, the grand finale of this remarkable journey which is his biography, oh thank Gods!"

Chrom yawned, eyeing the dimmed screen as he watched Robin work her magic, fabricating Rob's life through her own two eyes. Before she finished, it asked her one final thing as he leaned over a bit to get a better glimpse.

Are you okay with dating men and women who already have children? Click yes or no.

"Of course. After all, he's desperate for love," Robin thought to herself out loud, giggling gleefully as she clicked yes, thus completing Rob's profile. She turned around, getting up from the computer chair as she grabbed her iPhone which sat on top of the chestnut coffee table next to a empty, cream colored mug. Sliding her fingers horizontally across the touch screen, she typed in her passcode and tapped on the messages icon, almost as if she's starting her next phase to her devious plan.

Chrom raised a brow, being quite nosy as he wondered what she was up to now. He slowly made his way towards the arm chair, swiftly taking a sneak peek of Robin's screen as she appeared to be texting all of Rob's friends with the log in information to his dating profile, almost as if they were for her plan as well. Frowning a bit, he realized there was no use in debating the subject even

further than it already has been, knowing Robin's stubborn nature wouldn't dare to change her mind, especially when she's set her heart into something.

"Please Gods, at least let one of them tell him…"

Meanwhile in another part of town, a woman slumped over towards her room in at the Gloria Apartment Complex, digging frantically through her purse for the keys. After a minute or two passed, she managed to find the set of keys she was looking for as the woman placed it inside the lock, opening the door to see her roommate sitting on the leather couch, engrossed in her biology textbook. Right next to her was a small notebook with pages filled to the brim with valuable information.

The worn out woman closed the door behind her, locking it as it grabbed her roommate's attention, causing her to peer in the woman's direction as she plopped herself down on the vacant side of the charcoal couch, her face being directly on the cushion.

"Let me guess, tough night at work?" her roommate simply asked.

She perked up, her eyes being slightly droopy due to the lack of sleep she's been having lately. Taking a deep breath, she sighed in annoyance.

"Um, no shit Sherlock," she bluntly stated. The overworked woman moved her knees, making her shoes fall on the tile, landing in different directions as she sighed once more.

Her roommate just shrugged, noticing the workload was really starting to take a real toll on her. Part of her wished she could help the other woman yet deep down, knew they were in two different worlds one being with a high school diploma while the other dropped out at the age of sixteen.

"You really should take it easy Syd. The human body could only handle so much stress before it shuts down," she informed her, gently patting her back.

Syd miserably sighed, her tired eyes meeting the gentle, azure pair of her dear friend. She smiled faintly, her hair being messy from the nonstop restlessness at one of her many jobs.

"Oh dear, sweet Lucy, you're such a lovely saint you know? You're extremely patient, hell even tolerable of a negative deadbeat like me. Too bad you aren't free on the market, otherwise you would have been perfect," Syd simply stated. "If only you'd dump your measly boyfriend."

"Syd!" Lucy, otherwise her nickname for Lucina, retorted. "I can't do that to him! That would be such a awful thing to do, especially when he's been nothing but kind to me. And besides, I've practically known you since middle school. I know your quirks regardless how much you try to mask it with pride or some other silly guises."

The other woman chortled in response, fixing her posture as she forced herself off the couch forgetting that Lucina was originally working on biology homework. As much as she wanted to have another girls night out with the azure haired girl, Syd came to realize that her second job started in less than seven hours. The woman softly groaned, slowly making her way towards her bedroom to catch some shut eye before having to force herself yet again to deal with aggravating customers who treated her as if she were beneath them.

Nonetheless, before heading off into her own room, she made her way towards the door on the left, slowly opening it as it creaked, revealing an little girl's room. Syd strolled through some of the toys on the floor, picking them up and placing them in the bin before approaching the sleeping

child. Leaning over, the woman pecked the young child on the cheek before heading out and making her way towards her own bedroom.

Before she decided to turn in for the night, she opened up her laptop, clicking on Google Chrome as she logged into a website. In turn, she decided to give dating another try, especially since she didn't want her precious daughter to have a absent father figure in her life. After all, she deserved a lot better than what she could provide for her anyways. Unfortunately, the woman had the worst of luck when it came to relationships, either stuck in a cycle of abuse or the man turning out to be nothing more than a disgusting pig. As she browsed through tons of random profiles aimlessly, Syd managed to come across a perfect match, clicking it as the user's profile picture was the most goofiest thing she's ever gawked at. To her, it will suffice as she decided to risk it, taking every opportunity she could get.

Who knows even, perhaps, he may be the one.

Summer Sleep

Chapter Summary

Rob reminisces the fateful day he encountered that strange kid.

Chapter Notes

I was influenced by Memoryhouse's "Summer Sleep" when working on this chapter overall. If you feel up for it, I suggest listening to it while reading this chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

A young man no older than twenty-one tossed and turned in his sleep, clutching onto his comforter as the sun's morning rays pierced through the blinds, trying to wake him up. Soon, the radio perched on top of the small desk next to his bed turned on as it began in the middle of Best Coast's "Up All Night." The man groaned a bit in distress, coming to the awful realization that it was time for another day, another measly day of work, finishing up projects for his upper level courses related to his major in Legal Studies and finally, the unpredictable antics of his friends.

"I want to see you."

Rob slightly raised his head, reading the clock as it was 4:30am. Yawning, he decided to try his best to catch about fifteen minutes more minutes of precious sleep. Unfortunately that wasn't the case as his phone started going off, the loud vibration on the desk making it louder than it actually was. The man gave off a disgruntled sigh, reaching for his Samsung Galaxy, sliding the screen as he answered the call without bothering to check who even tried contacting him.

"Hello?" Rob answered, a bit groggy from a lack of a good night's rest.

"Morning Rob, didn't mean to call you so early in the morning."

He recognized his sister's voice from anywhere. Wondering what in the world Robin even wanted, he got up, leaving his soft, yet firm mattress to get ready for his opening shift. As he made his way towards his dresser, Rob opened it with his right hand, grabbing a cream collared shirt, some black dress pants along with matching shoes to boot.

"I want to see you."

"Um, Rob I can't hear you with that music being loud. Can you please do me a favor and turn it down?" Robin requested, feeling it was too early to be hearing anything let alone music.

Rob frowned, turning off the radio as he was fully garbed and ready to tackle the never ending sea of customers. He held onto his phone, placing his laptop inside his messenger bag along with his textbooks, writing utensils, anything he could utilize to do his academic assignments after his shift was over.

"Alright, it's turned down now," he replied. "Now, do you wish to inform me of something?"

"Well actually on second thought," Robin answered, pausing mid-sentence, "I think I just accidentally butt-dialed you is all. In fact, I should still be sleeping. See you soon bro!"

Before even having the chance to obtain the last word, his sister hung up on him. Rob sighed, shaking his head as sometimes he didn't understand what went on through that cranium of hers. According to his family, she's the gifted prodigy yet she seems to be more of a goofball than anything else. The twenty-one year old double checked his belongings, making sure he packed up everything he needed before heading out of his small tenant.

Rob stepped outside his apartment, grabbing his black jacket in haste as he began taking one of his early morning strolls through the seaside town of Esultare. The streets were sparse, the air being crisp and clean, the only smell lingering around consisting of the saltwater from the ocean not far within walking distance. The man couldn't quite grasp his finger on it, but something about the soothing tides put his overwhelming woes at ease.

A young, seven year old Rob glanced over at the ocean pier, observing the tides which took place in front of his very eyes. The cerulean water danced along the shoreline as it embraced the gritty sand next to it. The young Rob stretched out his right arm, trying to capture the soft, tranquil waves with his hand. The aquamarine vast sea always captivated Rob, drawing him in its hypnotic ripples which allowed his mind to create various creatures.

Rob made his way towards the beach, wanting to observe the beautiful sunset which currently took place, painting the ocean various shades of warm hues. He let the suns warm, rays bask in his brown orbs, spreading his arms out as he felt free as a bird. A slight, cool breeze passed by causing the palm trees near the shore to rustle their giant leaves. Unbeknownst, Rob's presence intrigued a mysterious figure who happened to be hanging out near the shoreline as well. With full-on curiosity, they were hesitant at first yet decided to approach him on their own whim.

"*The sunset is really lovely out here, isn't it?"*

The voice took the young white-haired boy by surprised, causing him to slightly jump back. Rob turned towards its direction and came face to face with another young boy his own age. His hair happened to be a light tint as it appeared to be short and tattered. The other child's skin complexion happened to be much darker than Rob's and addition to, a small bandage appeared to be on his left cheek. He donned a extremely worn out charcoal hoodie along with coal shorts and battered tennis shoes. Unfortunately, his eye color was quite difficult to make out in the sunset as it blended in the canvas of the warm hues.

Rob couldn't help but squint his eyes as he recalled seeing the boy before yet couldn't quite grasp where. It took the young aspiring genius about a full minute to collect his thoughts as he came to a realization that it was none other than that peculiar boy from school.

Rumor had it that the child was nothing but bad news. His family happened to be the main talk of the town for a entire month, the denizens murmuring about them wherever they went. Rob recalled his mother discussing about them one time over the phone with one of her good friends, describing them as low-class hayseeds with no regards for anyone but themselves. The mother was a deadbeat alcoholic, her boyfriend a ruthless ruffian with no respect for authority whatsoever, the outlandish grandmother who was famous for her wacky home remedies and driving away evil spirits with bizarre rituals, and last but not least, the child who stood right in front of him.

Rob remembered the boy's head was constantly up in the clouds, daydreaming his life away in his own fantasy world. During recess, he would dive into his fictional world as a means of escapism to get away from the cruel realities of the real world, forever embarking on a journey in his own

imagination. To add on, the boy had plenty of conversations with himself, even changing pitch to differentiate from one muse from another. As a result of his unusual actions, the odd child was frequently bullied by his other school mates.

The entire family was said to be full of vagrants, never staying put in a permanent home. They frequently had no means of support seeing how the mother constantly blew off the money on booze, cigarettes and material goods for herself while her boyfriend kept his own secret finances to himself under closed doors, thus being greedy. It was a never ending cycle of trust issues, always resulting in the mother constantly getting loose with a plethora of men.

"Say what is your name anyways? I've seen you around before yet I've never quite got it," Rob simply stated. He couldn't believe either, especially since he recalled his other classmates discussing about this foreign creature from outer space plenty of times.

"M-me?" he stammered a bit, pointing at himself. The lad tiled his head a bit, tapping his chin as he glanced over to the left. Soon, he took Rob by complete surprise as he extended his left arm, grinning wide.

"The name's Syd Heartley, what's yours?" he said, answering Rob's question.

"R-Rob Delahaye," the frosted haired youth quickly replied. Rob couldn't help but feel a bit awkward around the other child, finding it quite odd how quick he was to opening up. He slowly extended his right hand in return, engaging in a handshake as Syd appeared to have a strong grip.

"Nice to meet you Rob! I really hope we become the best of friends," Syd beamed. His eyes lit up, being excited to finally have a dear friend to call his own after seven years of entertaining himself. He hoped he didn't come off as desperate to Rob or that the boy will eventually take off and play mind games with him.

Rob in return, couldn't help but feel sorry for the poor child. He wondered why everyone treated him so differently just because of his family's reputation. Rob was beginning to learn that Syd wasn't like the rest of them, actually needing a friend to help him see the brighter side of the world. As he became engrossed in his own thoughts, the white haired boy slowly came to realize that he was quite disappointed with himself and in his best friend as well. They were quick to confirm to the mindset of their classmates, believing Syd to be a strange creature from another planet. Now that he's come face to face with him, Rob learned he was just like everyone else the only thing making him unique is his sense of imagination.

He smiled in return from his response, nodding. Rob felt a great connection between him and Syd, believing they would become another pair of best friends.

As the new pair of friends engaged with one another at the beach, a older woman appeared to be taking a evening stroll. By that point, the sun already vanished, allowing the moon to light up the night sky. She donned a exotic, silk shawl, a woolen dress with batik patterns and thick, henna boots. The old woman held onto a oak cane decorated in various feathers, jewelry and multiple shark teeth. The ancient woman took her time with every step, consistently peering over both directions as if she was looking for something or someone.

"Cynthie!" she shouted. "Cynthie! Where are you?!"

The pleas of the older woman came closer and closer as Syd froze for a moment before swiftly getting up.

"…I have to go now."

"*Wait!"*

It was too late. The boy stormed off, heading off in the opposite direction from the foreign elder. Rob blinked, watching him take off into the night, leaving no trace of evidence behind so to speak. He could not help but ponder why Syd exactly took off when the old woman started looking for a young girl. Unless ... his new friend wasn't exactly who he thought he was. Perhaps, there was more to Syd than meets the eye but for now, Rob decided it was best just to let it slide. After all, people have their reasons for withholding secrets, right?

As the woman departed from her flat, she journeyed her way through the flight of stairs heading straight towards the exit. Before leaving the apartment complex, a older man noticed her presence, smiling in response.

"Morning ma'am," he said in a humble tone, greeting her.

To his dismay, Syd didn't respond in the way he expected her too. Instead, she narrowed her eyes in his direction being slightly annoyed by the fact he had the audacity to even greet her. He was slightly taken aback by her ferocious attitude yet tried to proceed on through, acting as if she responded to him.

"Not a morning person, are ya?" he said once again, trying his best to engage her in a conversation.

Syd exchanged another dirty look with the older man, questioning why he was even trying to befriend her let alone imply she wanted to engage in small talk. She looked over his direction, huffing in response.

"And your point being?" Syd answered back with a hint of irritation in her voice, scowling over at the extroverted nuisance.

He couldn't believe the nerve of this woman. He gave her a slight glare in return from her response, wondering what made her so damn disrespectful in the first place. Hell, the man began pondering to himself if she treated everyone else like that as well with her awful mannerisms. Sadly, he couldn't gather himself to respond back knowing it wasn't worth fighting for. After all, there was no point in replying back, even starting a petty argument with someone who wasn't going to comply back let alone have a complete change of heart.

Syd managed to catch onto him, feeling relieved that he didn't even bother replying once more. However to add fuel to the fire, she shot a smirk in his direction, being pleased with the fact she managed to shut him up.

"That's what I thought," she exclaimed before heading out the door.

Once the doors were closed the man snarled, making a mental note never to even engage with the witch again.

"Man, what a fucking bitch," the man muttered to himself as he grabbed his mail and left the lobby.

The woman strolled through the parking lot and onto the sidewalk, clutching tightly onto her belongings. Prior to her knowledge, multiple sets of eyes were fixated on her as they observed her every move. When she disappeared from their sight, they took off in a flash almost as if they ceased to exist in the first place.

Rob placed his hand over his head, feeling a bit overwhelmed from the sudden nostalgia which unfolded in the blink of a eye. He couldn't help but wonder about something, quickly realizing he spent the early morning in what Sonic usually dubbed as La-La Land. He glanced over at his watch, his eyes widening a bit as he realized work started in about ten minutes! The young man quickly took off, making his way towards the upscale side of town where the university was also located.

By this time, the city streets were busy and full of life. Various citizens passed by one another, ranging from business men, college students to even elementary school children as idle chatter was prevalent throughout Rob's race to the finish. As he trotted through the various districts, the conversations either died down or merged with one another sounding like inaudible nonsense. It didn't help that some of the small shops which open up early blared all kinds of music genre, some catering towards the young folks while others more so towards the older generation.

Cynthia, my dream.

Oh Cynthia, my dream.

Rob managed to arrive over at the Roost Café with four minutes to spare, opening up its doors and immediately began getting ready to serve hordes of customers awaiting their morning java. Luckily, he had the first three hours to himself as he was scheduled by himself for opening shift. So, during that time the silver haired adolescent treated himself to his own music preferences as he turned on the satellite radio, changing it to the indie station. Unbeknownst, his mind happened to be fixated on one, particular name. Furthermore, that name happened to be none other than Cynthia.

The name itself derived from a alternative name for the Greek goddess Artemis, meaning divinity of the moon.

Chapter End Notes

In the next chapter, we will finally get to be introduced to Rob's friends and co-workers as well as finally encounter "Syd."

Until next time!

Monster Hospital

Chapter Notes

Whew, after an month of not updating, I've managed to finally finish chapter 3 of Honey and the Bee today! I feel that the length for it is rather decent though it would have been longer if I wanted to extend some of the scenes and introduce some more characters into the story. However part of me didn't feel like keeping you lovely readers hanging onto your seats any longer, so I've decided to release the chapter how it is. After all, I feel that 6.1k words is an good length to keep you guys occupied.

The chapter title is inspired by none other than "Monster Hospital" by Metric. I suggest giving it an listen even though personally, I like the MSTRKRFT Remix an lot better. I like to thank you all once again for tuning into HatB and of course my good friend for helping me. Since I haven't had the chance to play Xenoblade(which I really want to), she's helping me with the characters and whatnot, so I appreciate her for being awesome.

For future reference:

Note that when I put an character's dialogue in parentheses, they are speaking another language which is foreign to the one primarily spoken in the town itself.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The Roost Café is famous for its savory brews, let alone a local business which originated in the seaside town of Esultare. It was owned by none other than a middle-aged burly man by the name of Bruce "Brewster" Piaget, a retired marine officer. During his years in the military, he managed to obtain himself a reputation for the way he handled, let alone prepared coffee. This led him to achieving his famous nickname Brewster from his colleagues and to add on, they made frequent fun-hearted jokes about if Bruce were to ever retire, they can picture him opening up his own café right in Esultare.

Since he was going to be by himself before nine in the morning, Rob decided to spice up the old place and turned on the satellite radio, changing it to none other than his favorite indie station. Soon as it hit seven o'clock, Rob opened up the café doors as he welcomed its sanguine customers.

By nine o'clock, Rob quickly changed the station to an more, ambient one as his coworker walked in. The man looked to be extremely youthful, having a mop of messy, chestnut hair, cobalt eyes and overall looked like a teenager. Truth be told, this gentleman was older than Rob by about three years yet he looked to be almost about thirteen in comparison. Rob knew it was wise never to bring it up, knowing he would receive a mouthful from the man as he decided to join him behind the counter.

"Morning Pit," Rob greeted.

Pit glanced over at Rob before giving off a playful grin.

"Let me guess, you swiftly changed the hipster shit before I got here, right?" he guessed, always being right on the dot.

"Yep! I know how much you loathe it plus many of the other customers aren't too keen on it either. After all, indie music is a acquired taste," replied Rob. He began wiping the counter to keep himself occupied. After all, business usually slowed down around this time thus making The Roost have a more, relaxed atmosphere.

Around noon, two adolescents stepped inside the coffee shop, one of them heading over to reserve their favorite table while the other made their way towards the counter as they greeted both Rob and Pit.

"Hey Fox," Pit chirped. "Let me guess, you and Falc want the usual, am I right?"

"Of course!"

Fox placed the money down on the counter and slid it towards Pit's direction. Rob on the other hand, whipped up two café mochas along with the soup of the day before making his way over and placing it on the table.

The door opened once more as a young child by the age of ten stepped inside. He wore a yellow shirt with black vertical strips, the number six in the middle along with a pair of dark grey shorts. The brunet leaned against the glass, staring intensely at all of the delectable goodies, particularly the sugar toast on display. His hands slowly inched its way towards the scrumptious treat just for Pit to lightly tap it and shake his head.

The boy frowned before snapping his fingers and dug frantically through his pockets, managing to conjure up three dollars. He handed it over to Pit, receiving a nodding approval from the other brunet before he handed the fellow his sugar toast. Afterwards, the boy managed to squeeze himself into a tight place and took off.

"To this day, I still wonder how he even manages to do that," Pit muttered to himself before taking his break.

Fox and Falco appeared to be glancing at a website which displayed various mug shots of people.

"Say Fox, who from high school do you think would be on this website?" Falco asked, wanting input.

"Well, try Wolf's name, heck even add that slime-bag Ridley on there as well," replied Fox, being preoccupied with his cellphone.

Falco looked up their names in the search, only managing to get results for Ridley. It appeared he got arrested for assault and battery and of course, having a relationship with a minor.

"Wow, I'm not surprised," exclaimed the headstrong man.

"Me either. Least Samus doesn't have worry about putting up with him once more," Fox added as he texted the blonde herself the good news.

As Rob's shift came to an end, he began cleaning up some of the utensils to help out his incoming coworker who was replacing him for the remainder of the day. He removed his apron, hanging it up to give a subtle hint off to customers that he was now officially off duty. When he finished up, Rob left the counter, making his way towards a cozy spot in the corner as he opened up his messenger back to take out his laptop and other school related items. Afterwards, he grabbed out a pair of headphones, placing them in the correct ears before plugging it inside the laptop's

headphone jack.

A few minutes after, a young teenager no older than the age of sixteen arrived at the Roost making his way towards the back counter. He appeared to be a tall, lean athletic teenager with spiky sapphire hair along with light emerald eyes. The young adolescent hummed a merrily tune to himself, getting ready not only for his shift but to work alongside his one of his many idols as well.

"Hey Pit!" Sonic greeted. "When are you going to go back to school to relinquish your dreams of becoming a inspiring athlete?"

"Well, school honestly isn't for me Sonic. To be fair, I think my Crow is more deserving of a higher education while I'm honestly content just working here," Pit answered back.

"Well, you're never old to go back," the teen stated, grinning. "I know you'll eventually go back when you're ready. Then, you can finally achieve your dreams of playing alongside sports legends such as Darius 'Donkey' Kongo and Daisy Sarasa."

Pit just slightly smiled, bobbing his head as the two focused on doing their job for the time being.

The somber atmosphere started growing alive during the afternoon time. By that time, citizens were starting to retreat from their career fields, academic activities to unwind down after a long day of hard labor. To add on, Fox and Falco became rowdier during the afternoon as they were up to their usual antics consisting of endless jokes, chatter and of course, getting competitive with one another. It didn't help that Sonic ecstatically fueled them up making a never endless cycle of various conversations which constantly shifted subjects every few minutes or so.

The conversation of the day happened to be about none other than their previous high school encounters. Rob sometimes yearned to engage within their vast discussions yet in spite of it all, they were in two completely different worlds. The aspiring law student wasn't much for sports let alone mindless chatter on subjects which didn't suit nor catch his attention in the slightest. Then again, Falco might insult him then and there about toning up his body seeing how Rob himself looked like a sickly twig while the other man in comparison's body was more defined, toned and overall, appealed to both sexes.

So instead of wanting to relive his high school days once more, his mind wandered off, drifting into the past.

Rob leaned against the railing, staring out at the endless body of water in front of him. The young child sighed, coming to the conclusion that his sister played him for a fool once again. Shaking his head, he decided it was best to head home before it got dark otherwise his mother would be concerned to include questioning his whereabouts. However, before he was able to leave the seaside district of town, Rob managed to overhear a ongoing conversation not too far from him. He couldn't help but feel startled, fleeing to the nearest object he can manage to hide behind without causing any suspicion. After all, the two voices appeared to be speaking in a foreign language the young lad didn't seem to quite recognize at all.

Wanting to get a glimpse of whoever was out near the ocean side during the evening, Rob perked his head up, recognizing the strange garbed woman from a week ago. Across from her appeared to be a younger woman who appeared to be in her early twenties who looked disinterested, miserable even. Both of them had a bronze complexion which took Rob a few minutes to guess what kind of people they were until it hit him, the two grown-ups were Homs.

The small child didn't know much about Homs and their culture, mannerisms and even why they

originally came to the small town of Esultare to begin with. Unfortunately, the only information he could recall about Homs were how others perceived these indigenous folk which also included his school mates, teachers to even his own family and friends. Rob gently began stroking his cheeks together with his right thumb and pointer finger as if trying to stem up some more memories about his limited knowledge on the Homs themselves.

A few seconds later, Rob remembered the Homs living in the more rural side of town consisting more so of open markets, strange chanting, peculiar medical treatments, to even higher crime rates. According to the more privileged denizens of Esultare which consisted of everyone else (to include the high-class races the Hylians and the High Entia), the Homs were nothing more than worthless garbage trying to overtake the town with their ludicrous ideologies and to add on, their filthy diseases.

"*(That piece of filth could die for all I fuckin' care!)*"

"*(It's not the child's fault! Don't YOU ever blame that poor child for something that is certainly beyond her reach!)*"

The woman scoffed, rolling her eyes as the older woman spoke nothing but mere words she could care less about.

"*(Mother, why are you so eager to defend such useless trash? In fact, it pisses me off that you chose her over me, your own flesh and blood! Just thinking about it makes me want to vomit,)*" *she barked back, narrowing her glare at the elderly woman in front of her.*

The younger woman's mother was appalled even if she knew this was the sort of behavior she should expect from her own kin by now. It always tore her to pieces knowing that her daughter didn't grow up into someone she thought she'll be yet bygones will always be bygones.

"*(Well, if you insist of not properly giving your own child the love she needs then you shouldn't have spread your damn legs open to begin with!)*" *the older woman yelled back. She couldn't believe how selfish her daughter was being, let alone she didn't hesitate to harm the poor thing at every opportunity she could get.*

Rob felt uneasy as he slowly backed away from the arguing Homs, wondering what they were even discussing about to begin with. The young boy knew if someone were to come out, they would bluntly declare the two women as savages, even tell them to go back to where they came from. If he observed them much longer, it would only put more strain on his mother.

As Rob drifted away from the Homs, he heard the older woman continuing her search for someone as she yelled out that particular name once again.

Cynthia.

The question which Rob pondered about that night is who exactly this Cynthia girl they're looking for is.

"Hey Rob."

The young man appeared to be absorbed in a sea of his own vivid mediations. Slowly but surely, its enticing currents rose up, almost swallowing him up whole. a pleasing voice pierced through the rigid storm, reaching out to rescue the submerged Rob from the depths of no return.

"Hey Rob! Earth to Rob, are you there?" it pronounced, managing to row through the violent ocean currents of the man's own subconscious.

"O-oh, yeah I am!" he hastily answered, diverting his attention towards none other than Pit. The brunet appeared to be slightly worried about his coworker, almost as if he could pass out at any given moment. Shortly after, Pit returned to join Sonic back behind the counter to make more delicious brews and serve the never-ending swarm of customers.

About a hour later, a portly middle-aged woman opened up the door, allowing a couple of small children to step inside the Roost Café. She donned the most elegant crimson dress with matching shoes, dark stockings and overall, complimented her thick, coral hair which happened to be curled into a swirl at the front. She made her way towards the register while of the youngsters roamed around freely, finding ways to entertain themselves.

"Good afternoon Miss Jillian," greeted Sonic. "I take it you're ordering the usual?" he asked, swiftly following up as the teen prepared himself to jolt down her order.

Her lips curled as she bobbed her head. She began digging through her maroon leather purse, taking out her wallet as she opened it up, handing the aspiring athlete her debit card. Grabbing the blue card out of her hands, Sonic totaled up her order before swiping the card and handing it back to her along with the receipt.

"Here you go ma'am. Your Kilimanjaro with two sugars and a little bit of milk will be out shortly," Sonic informed the school teacher.

Jillian smiled once more before calling the little rascals over towards the round table. Pit came out of the backroom, holding a tray plastered with apple juice cartons, sliced apples, crackers with little circular containers full of caramel sauce for dipping. The brunet made his way towards the table, slightly leaning forward as he gently placed the tray in the middle causing the round woman to become flustered.

"We can't forget about these little ones now, can't we? So here's a small snack they could munch on, courtesy of Brewster himself!" Pit chirped.

"Oh, you guys are too kind!" Jillian exclaimed in return, serving her present students their fair share of crackers, sliced apples alongside their apple juice. She watched them clutch their tiny hands on their treats, gleefully munching on them with delight.

"Now, now children, what do we say?"

The group of small children peered over in Pit's direction, their big orbs staring at the older brunet.

"Thank you Mr. Athena," they all said in unison.

As Pit began making his way towards the back counter to finish off his shift, a young girl glanced over and followed him. She tried her best to suppress her giggles, even crawling on her knees as the child pursued Pits' every move. However, the chestnut haired adolescent wasn't quite gullible as she made him out to be. He turned around, his sky-blue eyes coming face to face with a pair of big, amethyst orbs. She wore the kindergarteners' uniform of Starfall Elementary which composed of a grey-blue sweater, a saffron pleated skirt, milky, knee-high socks and some black mary janes. The little girl had a side ponytail on the right side of her head, complimented by a small royal blue bow with gold embroidery.

"Lana, you know you're not allowed to go back here unless you're a employee," Pit sternly informed her. He knew it was useless even explaining this to a child yet it was work policy.

Lana frowned in response, puffing her cheeks as she pouted and folded her arms.

"But Piiiit," she whined, giving him puppy dog eyes, "I wanna be with you!"

Pit scratched the back of his head and sighed softly. He knelt and placed his right hand on the top of her head, gently patting it as he smiled.

"I know you want to be with me Lana but I have work. If Pit doesn't do his job that means Pit can get in big trouble. You don't want Pit to get in big trouble do you?" he asked, moping in response.

Lana shook her head in response as Pit grinned before picking her up. He began making rocket ship noises as he lifted the young girl up, moving her around as he made his way towards the round table to return her to Jillian and the others. The little darling twittered the whole time, spreading her arms out and began moving them up and down as if she was a dove. Soon, Pit arrived at their destination as he placed her next to a salmon haired boy by the name of Kirby.

"Beep! Beep! Beep! You have now arrived at your destination! Thank you for choosing Skyworld Air as your designated airline," he cheerfully proclaimed, bowing down before trotting his way back towards the back counter.

Rob perked up, observing how ecstatic his compeer looked playing around with the bubbly child. It was rather unusual to see him like that, especially with small children due to the fact that in actuality, Pit could care less about kids. He usually found them to be rather fussy, unbearably bothersome and overall, attention seekers.

Snickering was heard from not a far distance as the silver-haired individual gazed at the source's direction as he observed Fox ogling over Falco's cellphone.

"Oh god, this reply is making me cringe so fucking hard right now," he simply stated, trying his best not to cackle into a fit of continuous howling.

"Let me see!" Fox said, learning to get a better glimpse of the reply. He inspected the screen which displayed two avatars, one consisting of a cartoon cat's head on a prodigious body in front of a rainbow decorated in hearts, sparkles and of course, rose colored font. It almost reminded Fox of Hello Kitty gone wrong as he glanced over at the second avatar which displayed a picture of none other than a Shiba Inu, a dog breed known for being bold, strong willed and even stubborn. Soon, he moved towards the reply before flinching back.

"Geez, whoever this woman is she sure has some colorful vocabulary!" he scornfully winced, not sure if he wanted to torture himself some more or walk away and forever hold his peace about this.

"More like she's fucking horny, am I right?" Falco boasted, holding onto his electronic device. In fact, he couldn't help but share the woman's reply with the café. Sonic was eager to check out what all the fuss is about however Pit placed his hand on the teen's shoulder as if hinting not to get himself involved in their duplicitous fiasco.

The cockier male messed around with his hair and slightly removed his cream jacket as if to mimic a voluptuous vixen, even changing his voice to sound provocative as he began sharing her reply.

"Hey HighDeliverer89, how do you preoccupy yourself when feeling aroused? For me, I usually engage in self-pleasure to obtain amorous satisfaction. Depending on my mood, I either use my vibrator or massage my cli-!"

Before he could go any further, Jillian cleared her throat, shooting him a nasty glare in their direction before getting up from her seat.

"Ahem! Young man, do you kiss your mother with that fowl mouth of yours?!" the teacher

retorted, finding his colorful language extremely inappropriate for the present children in the establishment.

"Well, duh," Falco snickered back, finding her argument to be piss poor. "How else am I'm supposed to kiss her, with my ass?"

Rob kept quiet, engrossed in his studies while Fox joined in on his friend's mischief. The hefty woman huffed in utter exasperation, highly repulsed by Falco's attitude and word choices. While she managed to engage in a one-sided argument with Falco, Rob managed to tune them out once more returning back to the mystery of Cynthia.

Rob meandered behind an adventurous Chrom afterschool as the indigo-haired boy was getting ready for his first soccer practice meeting. The youngster had nothing better to do on his own spare time, so he decided to prolong returning home by tailgating his best friend. As time began ticking, Chrom glanced towards the shorter boy's direction.

"*I got to go in five minutes Rob! Tell your sister I said hi!"*

Before he could wish him the best of luck or even say goodbye, Chrom was gone in a flash. Rob sighed softly as he began to slowly make his way towards the school gates. Howbeit before he could even reach his destination, Rob heard a couple of students causing a ruckus not from afar. Being the curious child that he always was, he ran towards its direction only to come across a gruesome sight.

"*Don't you dare talk back to me dirtblood!" yelled a stocky boy, moving his first towards his prey as he punched them in the face once more. Another boy held tightly onto their helpless victim, sniggering as they squirmed yet to no avail, couldn't get out of his grasp.*

"*Why do they even allow filthy trash like you to even come here," shouted another as they appeared to hold onto a excessively depleted book bag. The boy opened up its zipper, digging through its contexts until he came across a item of interest. Taking it out, it revealed to be none other than a mahogany notebook filled to the brim with information about a fantasy world which the story touched up on a clan of highly acclaimed sorcerers.*

"*Ooh, what's this?" he said, dangling the notebook.*

"*Let me see!" said another boy. The other ruffian handed the notebook over as the third boy opened it up and began looking through it.*

"*Sorcerers clan? Temple of Souls? Valley of Seers?! What kind of junk is this anyways?" the kid complained, being absolutely disgusted by such absurd imagination.*

"*Garbage of course, who else proposes this crap anyways? Oh wait, only lowlife aliens think of stuff like this. In fact, let's dump it in the pond right there," the other brat suggested, receiving nods of agreement from his friends.*

"*N-no, p-please don't!" the victim cried out.*

Rob recognized the voice to be none other than Syd's as he pleaded to the bullies, begging them to spare his notebook however his attempts failed. They tossed it into the pond, causing Syd to frantically squirm once more, even kicking and screaming for help before they huddled towards him to shut his mouth. Soon after, they picked him up, tossing him right into the pond to join his beloved fantasy world before scurrying off.

Syd was now drenched from top to bottom, his hair murky from the pond and even received a

black eye from the punch earlier. He began to panic, trying his best to rescue his miniature novel which he poured put his heart and soul into.

Rob made his way over towards him, worried about his well-being.

"Syd, are you alright?!" he asked him.

The other boy looked at Rob, becoming overwhelmed by his sudden appearance. He tried his best to mask his pain with a smile to assure him that everything is fine. A few minutes later, he came across his drenched notebook as he stared at it and tossed it on the concrete before getting out of the pond and taking off.

Rob dashed after him, following Syd's every move. He was eventually taken near the back of a tool shed as he heard muffled crying. Peering over, he saw Syd's face crumbled as he broke down, sobbing up a storm. The boy's signature hoodie laid on his left side as it revealed a malnourished body covered in immense welts and bruises. His body appeared to be extremely thin, almost feminine even.

He slowly approached him, causing Syd to perk up at him and take him by complete surprise.

"Did you come here to hurt me too?" Syd quickly assumed, feeling skeptical about anyone and anything at this point.

"N-no, of course not! I'll never do anything like that, I promise," Rob quickly replied back. He plopped himself down next to the boy, feeling sorry for him. Rob recalled finding him odd at first yet his quirkiness somehow grew on him. Now, Rob found Syd to be rather open minded, thoughtful and even creative.

"…Rob, can I confess something to you?"

"S-sure! You can tell me anything."

"If I tell you this, do you promise not to get mad at me?" Syd stammered, getting slightly tense in the meantime.

"Of course! I promise."

Rob wondered what secrets Syd harbored away from the public eye. He didn't know much about the strange boy to begin with other than the fact that his mother is Homs while his real father is rumored to be Hylian.

"You see… I'm sorry for deceiving you…" Syd said, apologizing for some peculiar reason.

Raising a brow, Rob couldn't help but wonder what he even meant by those words. "What do you mean Syd? You've been nothing but grateful."

"No… you don't understand. I'm not Syd, I never was. You see, I'm not even an actual boy. I just chose to live this way because I want to be accepted by my own mother. The only one who loves me in my family is Grandma… that's it."

The young Rob couldn't help but feel his heart crumbling at Syd's depressing tale. What hurt was knowing the very fact that Syd masked his pain with smiles and his vast imagination. He wondered why his mother wouldn't want him in the first place, especially seeing how they're supposed to be strong and nurture their offspring, not despise them. Instead of lashing out at him, no her, he gave the girl the benefit of the doubt. He too knew the struggle of obtaining a parent's approval.

"*So, if you're not Syd, then what is your name? That is, if you don't mind telling me of course," he asked.*

"*It's Cynthia…."*

Rob snapped out of his alluring thoughts once more and took a quick glance at the time. Realizing that he promised to meet Chrom, Mac and Samus at the local pub a week ago, the man frantically shut down his notebook and hastily shoved it into his messenger bag before taking off without any word.

He surveyed the area one last time, noting the bubbly girl wailing to her heart's content. Rob quickly asked Sonic for a short summary of the details as the teen informed him that the girl began growing blue watching her classmates get picked up by their parents. With those words, Rob thanked him before leaving in a flash.

Pit continued to play with Lana in the meantime, trying his best to keep prevent her from crying up another storm. After all, he knew all children began missing their parents when they've been apart from them for long periods of time. It was quite common for her mother to be extremely late nor not even bother to show up. Usually her mother's roommate took responsibility on picking her up afterschool but without regard to, had school obligations she had to attend to otherwise it would certainly put a devastating mark on her grade.

Soon, everything grew dead silent as the door opened wide, revealing none other than a tall, sleek woman with the most captivating bronze complexion one could ever gaze upon. Her white hair perfectly suited her skin tone almost enough for her to become the perfect model. Yet wherever she went or appeared, the weather turned bleak, representing her cold-blooded, nasty personality. It didn't help the fact that she naturally had a scowl plastered onto her face either.

A chill went down Sonic's spine as Fox and Falco kept surveyed her every move while Pit kept his mouth shut. The woman was somewhat infamously known in Esultare for her wicked ways and furthermore, neglecting her own child. Even though these were only mere rumors, the denizens weren't going to risk any chances and thus, stood a few away whether she was nearby. An eerie chill always present itself every time one spoke the witch's eponym, her alias being none other than Cia Heartley.

Lana on the other hand, beamed wide, being rather joyous for her presence. She hopped off Pit's stomach, rushing over towards the warm with open arms.

"Mommy!" she boasted gleefully, journeying her way towards the woman. As she got closer towards the vile she-devil, the young girl stumbled upon her own two feet, collapsing onto the sharp, tiled flooring. A single tear shed from her large, violet eyes followed by another until a steady stream of tears flowed its way down, lightly tapping the tile beneath her. Soon it turned into full blown wailing as it appeared she scraped her knee in the process.

While most parents would quickly tend to their child's wounds right away, Cia on the other hand, begged to differ. Instead, she just rolled her eyes as she scoffed in outright revulsion causing the residum to feel nothing but completely sympathy for the young Lana.

"Get up," she groused, ordering her daughter to stop her pathetic actions at once. Instead of listening, the five year old continued sobbing as Pit glowered at the nasty woman, making silly faces as he tried his best to cheer the little girl up.

Cia narrowed her eyes and glared at Pit in response, mouthing some inaudible slurs before her menacing eyes gazed at Lana once more.

"If you don't stop crying this instant, I'm leaving you behind!" she ordered once more, losing the little patience she had left in her.

Her response only caused Lana to sob uncontrollably as she threw herself on the floor like any other child would when they're frustrated. Jillian seemed awfully concerned at that point, almost about to intervene if things were to get worse. Fox and Falco just watched the entire scene go down while Sonic tried his best to ignore it. Cia knew meddlesome eyes pierced at her direction nonetheless, she could care less. Instead, she turned her back and made her way towards the exit.

"I'm done," she cholerically spoke once more before retreating the café, keeping her word as she left her own daughter behind. Lana quickly got up and grabbed her backpack and dashed towards the exit to catch up to her mother. The door shut itself yet again, being followed by a moment of silence before everything resumed as normal.

"Wow… what a fucking bitch!" said Fox, feeling sorry for the poor child. It bothered him to even know she had to bear through that every single day of her life.

"You've said it," Falco chimed in, agreeing with his best friend. Jillian only sighed in response, being glad the last child was finally picked up. She grabbed her belongings as she thanked both Pit and Sonic for being so patient with the schoolchildren before heading out the door.

Sonic looked over towards the two loiterers as he leaned over, making a snide remark.

"You know what that woman needs? Some Vitamin C meaning vitamin chill the fuck out, geez."

"You said it dude!"

Pit got up and began wiping tables and organizing the chairs. His shift was almost done for the day and he figured it was best to forget that whole incident. After all, he didn't want it ruining his day nor getting in the way of his evening, especially when he's going to meet up with his twin brother.

Lana pushed her way through the hordes of passers-by, trying her hardest to correspond to her mother's flashing pace. The child stumbled once more, falling onto her knees as she reopened the wound on her left knee.

Cia turned around and came face to face with her daughter as she stared off into space. For a split second, Lana's body morphed into another form, revealing none other than a young "boy" with short, butchered white hair and tan skin. She felt her heart slightly suspend itself in that movement and soon after, Cia felt nothing but sincere guilt for her previous actions.

Lana tightly shut her eyes and began sniffling as the child tried her best to mask her pain. Before she knew it, she felt arms wrapping themselves around her, pulling her into a tight embrace.

Two-faced

The young girl opened her eyes just to see her mother hugging her tightly.

"(Mommy's sorry for having an atrocious outburst earlier. She was just overwhelmed from a bad day at work,)" she softly muttered.

Miscreant

"(I didn't mean to take it out on you sweetie, I really didn't,)" she said once more, feeling nothing but remorse for her own child.

Shortly after, Cia kissed her knee before pecking her check. Next, she ambushed the young Lana into a tickle fest, causing the child to burst into a fit of laughter as the woman smiled. She couldn't care less about who was staring at her right now or what they even thought of her. After all, she truly did put her daughter above all else.

Libertine

A few minutes later, Cia finished her tickle fest as she continued donning her elegant smile. The silver haired woman brushed off Lana's clothes before standing up and extended out her right arm.

"(How about you and me go get some ice cream)?" Cia lovingly proposed to her offspring. Lana brightly gleamed, nodding her head as she grabbed her mother's hand as they began trotting their way towards the ice cream parlor located in the Esultare's cultural district.

As they made their way towards the street, Lana tugged on her mother's shirt as she began to grow weary. Cia took good note of it as she bent down, picking her child up before proceeding on.

You're nothing but a grotesque monster.

Cia froze right in her tracks as she frantically looked around in the lively crowd. She held her daughter more tightly, walking at a faster pace as if she saw something horrifying. Her mind was obviously playing tricks on her, trying to seize every opportunity it can get.

Lately the voice or what she dubbed as none other than the shadow started reoccurring frequently, becoming more and more prevalent in her life. The last thing she wanted was to fall under its grasp with the possibility of fully succumbing into complete darkness.

The woman already thought of herself to be nothing but a ragdoll for the world to kick around and pick at its wounds. It's always been that way since the day she was born.

My, my, it appears that your mask is slowly crumbling into desolate remains. Father Time inquires how much further will it be until you completely crack?

Her heart frantically raced as Cia tried her best to suppress her urge to scream and lash out at the shadow. She knew by now there was no point in fighting nor any way of getting out of its game of chess. She was the pawn it was after while the shadow was none other than the one who was in control.

Soon, she managed to get closer towards the Esultare's cultural district.

You can run all you want but you know your efforts are meaningless. In fact, let this be a little life lesson to you my dearest Cia or should I rather say, Cynthia. You can hid all you want but remember, I'll always be one step ahead of you. After all, Big Brother is watching you.

A chill ran down Cia's spine as the shadow always knew where she was at any given time. The white haired woman was lost in a trail of her own thoughts, drifting away from the harsh depths of hell known as reality. Her hearing dimmed and right before she knew it, the woman collided with someone else as it caused them to drop their belongings.

"What the hell! You, quit being so clumsy and pick up this mess immediately! Whatever you do, ignore the disgusting harlot as she isn't deemed worthy enough for my own two eyes. After all, she obviously stole that child, why else would she be fleeing."

Cia tuned out the man who degraded her and instead, came face to face with soft, cerulean eyes.

The man extended his arm out to her, completely disregarding the figure yelling at him.

"Ma'am, are you and your daughter alright?"

Chapter End Notes

And the chapter ends with the mystery of Cynthia finally being answered along with Shulk getting an cameo towards the end. He'll be fleshed out more in chapter 4.

Note that is the first time I actually typed out something more perverted so please bear with me. I'm learning how to write this lovely stuff just for this fic. :P

Terminology:
Cynthia - woman from Kynthos
Diminutives include Cindy, Cynnie, Cynthie, and Cia.

Cia - of the moon

Temple of Souls - An mystical place that many don't know its existence, the only ones being the most prestigious sorcerers. The palace reflects the mental state of its owner which has various results. If their mind is at war, the palace is warped to represent decay, even corruption.
Hint: Think of the metaphor, the eye is on the prize.(The prize being the soul of the hero in the game)

High Deliverer - The title of the Avatar in Awakening for their first possible ending if they're not married off.

Anyways, until next full moon(or whenever I get around to updating)
-Ash

A Sea of Never-ending Regrets

Chapter Notes

Wow, it's been a while since I've updated this story. Well, it's nice to see that it's managed to obtain some followers over the course of its duration. I do heavily apologize for the long wait, let's just say life's endeavours got the best of me. I ended up taking a course over the summer(to graduate faster) and slowly but surely, it ended up draining me more than it should. The motivation to write was completely sucked dry and it was quite dreary to be honest.

I did manage to go back and clean up some errors I've managed to catch in the first three chapters(just skimmed chapter 2 tbh). Also changed the rating from T to M here due to a certain scene in this particular chapter.

Once again, I'd like to thank everyone for support to include my awesome friends who are helping me with Xenoblade information because the Wiki itself doesn't tell you shit.

Do expect this story to update at a much slower pace since I am toggling multiple stories at once, let alone going to pick up a older story again and try to finish some others. And of course, school work and 10+ page core assessments.

I do however, thank my readers for being patient with a slow turtle like me.

Forewarning for unintentional OOC, use of derogatory slurs, and rape(child molestation) towards the end.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"Ma'am, are you and your daughter alright?"

Cia glanced at her daughter, making sure she wasn't hurt before perking up at the man who stood in front of her as she began observing him. The man appeared to be quite humble yet at the same time he seemed to be really sorry. Furthermore, he looked extremely weak that berating him would only make her look like a gruesome monster in comparison and thus, prove the raging hooligan's point. The more she dwelled about the man in front of her, the more Cia was able to grasp a better estimate of his character or rather, how she portrayed him.

From just one glance, he appeared to be the type that kept to himself to include his own sea of thoughts and feelings. Cia has encountered a tremendous amount of people like him in the past and strictly knew they were not to be toyed with. Due to their meek nature, these types were often mistaken either as being too shy for their own good or in some cases, upbeat. They rarely told anyone what's bothering them or expressed feelings of distraught and instead, bottled up their emotions.

As she continued to analyze the young man in front of her, the other boy accompanying him continued to grow impatient seeing how he already was in a sour mood. He had his arms folded, giving Cia a look of uttermost disgust before turning his gaze towards the clumsy man in front of her.

"Shulk," he simply demanded, "ignore her and pick up the damn mess you caused alright?!"

Unbeknownst to Cia's eye, Shulk happened to be observing her as well as both of them ignored the irritated fool right near them. The Homs recognized seeing her before yet couldn't quite exactly pinpoint where and when. He began tapping his chin a bit, trying to see if stemming would help him recall his own thoughts. From a first impression standpoint, Shulk knew that Cia was the type of person one should proceed with caution. She seemed to be rather headstrong, arrogant and even prideful and more so, loved boasting about her sense of self. It was in her nature never to show any form of weakness or give up on what she thinks is rightfully hers to claim. The more the Homs analyzed her, the more he realized he recognized seeing this woman somewhere before but where?

Soon, it hit him. This woman was none other than one of the waitresses at the local restaurant down in the cultural district. He recalled seeing her a couple of times when she was younger (and working as a busser), noticing how much at ease the woman was compared to her much more youthful days. Even if Cia never uttered a word unless spoken to during those times, Shulk remembered how much heart and soul she put into her job, let alone struggling to provide not only for herself but her child as well.

"Ahem," the sour man interrupted. The two just glanced at him for a split second before carrying on their conversation. Seeing how the two continued to ignore him, the man continued huffing in the background, hoping to obtain Shulk's attention once more.

"(…Hey, who's the fucking asshole with you?)" Cia asked as she rolled her eyes to her annoyance.

"(Him? Well, believe it or not that asshole is my boyfriend Marth. He may come off as a primadonna at times but I may assure you that he does have his shining moments as well,)" Shulk simply replied.

Cia raised her brow a bit either from complete shock or due to her own skepticism. Whoever this Marth character was, he certainly didn't deserve Shulk in the slightest. In terms of personality and characteristics, the Homs was completely the polar opposite in comparison to his alluring boyfriend.

("Wait… that man's your boyfriend?! You're kidding right, I mean you could do so much better. Look at him, that man looks rather feminine, almost as if he could pass for sissy.")

As much as she hated to admit, Cia couldn't help but feel a bit jealous of someone like Marth seeing how he was not only charming like prince but also managed to snag himself a devoted lover. Even if she truly felt Shulk could still obtain better, she admired how patient the Homs was with regards to the azure haired man's sour personality, let alone his arrogance.

(Well,)" Shulk exclaimed, chuckling a bit from her reaction, "(every bad apple has its charm believe it or not. Marth's not that gruesome once you get to know him and look past his flaws. Everyone, regardless if they're human, Hylian, High Entia or even Homs have both positive and negative traits. It's what makes our emotions complex and to add, quite fascinating. Marth's just a special case and needs to learn that patience is a virtue.")

Marth on the other hand, rolled his eyes as he folded his arms and tapped his foot as if to trying to tell Shulk to cut with the chitchat and pick up his belongings.

"Shulk, does the bitch even know any lick of English? You do know how much that foul language disgusts me…." he complained.

The blond ignored him as he continued talking to Cia, erasing Marth's mere existence for the time being. As they continued to converse with one another, the Homs suddenly realized he forgot to introduce himself.

"(My apologies, I became heavily engrossed in our discussion that I forgot to introduce myself. The name's Shulk Soss!)"

"(It's a please to meet you Shulk, I'm Cynthia Heartley however I tend to go by my nickname Cia,)" she answered. The staggering woman grinned wide as she slightly turned her heard towards her child before looking back at Shulk. "(Believe it or not, this little girl with me is none other than my daughter Lana.)"

"(That's your daughter?!)" Shulk beamed. He knelt down to get a better glimpse of Lana as well as match the five year olds height. "(She's quite adorable! In fact, she almost looks like a splitting image of her mother well, minus the hair color of course.)"

Cia ecstatically cracked up in his response before glancing down at Lana.

"(Say hi Lana,)" Cia playfully ordered, patting her daughter on the back. Lana in return perked up at the Homs before retreating back to safety behind her mother. Shulk knew it was fairly common for small children to either be welcoming or frightened by strangers yet he still found little Lana to be quite the cute child.

Before he had the chance to even comment on Lana's actions, Marth moved in between the two as he held both of his arms out horizontally.

"Enough!" he shouted, glaring directly at Cia before facing the Homs. Marth could only handle so much of idle chatter let alone, hearing questionable moonspeak to no end. Cia scowled in return, huffing in exasperation as she crossed her arms and swayed her hips moved to the right. Time was ticking and her patience for Marth was running out. Her tolerance level was similar to that of a bomb, slowly ticking down until it gets to the last second, then boom!

"Shulk, stop running your mouth to that filthy whore in front of you and gather up the belongings you dropped due to your incompetence!" the ice prince demanded as his tone was filled with aggression.

Shulk only sighed in response as Cia easily picked up his discomfort. She did truly admire how patient Shulk was with his onerous boyfriend. If that was her, Cia would have already lashed out a storm and give the man a piece of her mind. She would definitely make sure he not only remembers her name and in addition to, fears it.

"(As much as I would love to continue our conversation, Mr. 1-800 Sunshine over here is being a god damn pain in the ass. It was really nice meeting you Cia yet I have to get to work before the prick creates drama for the sake of having it,)" Shulk calmly informed her. The half Homs nodded in understanding, giving him her upmost sympathy as she grabbed Lana's hand and passed by the two men to continue her journey to the ice cream parlor.

However, she wasn't going to let Marth have the last word. Before she disappeared from their sight, Cia swiftly turned around, lifted up her left arm and flipped him off.

"Hey faggot," she boasted, "for your information, I do speak English and two, go choke on a fucking dick. Oh wait, I forgot, you're too much of a little bitch to even get any."

Marth's reaction was priceless as his jaw dropped as her words slapped him directly on his beautiful face. Before he even had the chance to produce a comeback, Cia already took off as she

was nowhere to be found. Shulk on the other hand, tried his best to suppress his laughter as he honestly thought Marth needed to be taught a lesson even if he felt the slur was rather unnecessary.

If there was anything Shulk could applaud Cia for it would be for the ability to speak her own mind and not take smack from anyone.

Pit's shift slowly came to an end as the brunet began cleaning up some of the utilities as an older, middle aged man stepped inside the Roost. He appeared to be fairly tall, almost staggering at six feet as his burly body gave outsiders the impression of a brawler. The man's hair was a light navy along as it appeared to be slowly but surely thinning out due to age.

Bruce was quite known for being a man of a few words, let alone kept to himself. Some speculated that his quiet nature was due to some of the things he experienced during the navy while some assumed otherwise. Yet despite those rumors running afloat, Bruce is extremely passionate about his work once he warms up however, only his regulars knew the real man behind the counter. Word on the street had it that if one made frequent visits to his café, Bruce would eventually warm up and even allow them to taste new brews.

Bruce took note of his favorite employee prepping up a specialty hot chocolate as the brunet took extra time on crafting it.

"Let me guess, are you whipping up your little brother some hot cocoa before you head off Pit?" Bruce guessed predictably.

"Yep," Pit chimed, "after all, he truly deserves it. He always complaining how cold the classrooms are so I felt like treating him to something special, you know?"

The boy's response caused Bruce to smile before Pit parted ways with his boss and began heading over towards Bovinor University.

As Pit arrived at the university entrance, the brunet trotted inside and began looking for a herd of crows gathering up one particular area. The youthful man clutched onto the coffee cup as he walked past the language arts department and trudged his way towards the psychology department as it was surrounded by a plethora of trees. Not from a far, a charcoal haired boy appeared to be surrounded by a murder as a baby crow perched itself on top of his head, chirping as it noticed Pit coming towards him. Shortly after, the other birds glanced over in the chestnut haired man's direction as well to include its "owner."

"It's that time already?" the boy exclaimed. His tone sounded like a mixture between feeling ecstatic and bummed out at the same time. His crimson eyes observed Pit, reading through him like a novel until it caught a glimpse of the coffee cup.

"Here Crow, I brought you some hot chocolate just the way you like it," Pit offered which was quickly followed by a slight chuckle. He noticed the young chick currently residing in his twin's "nest" as Pit couldn't help but find it quite adorable.

Crow grabbed the coffee cup from his brother before taking a sip. It was just the way he liked it yet he was rather in the move for some coffee.

"Pit, can't you bring me coffee for a change?" he questioned.

"Crow, last time you had coffee you complained that it was too bitter."

"Well, that was just auto drip coffee! You know how much I detest auto drip."

"No, it was a specialty coffee with two extra pumps of white mocha sauce!" Pit simply stated as he sighed. "Anyways, is there anything new that you've learned today?"

"In my Social Psychology class, we've learned about the Dramaturgical theory today. Our teacher used the Shrek film as an example where he describes ogres are like layers. The first layer, or rather the front stage is where the actor performs conventions that have meaning to the audience. In retrospect, the definition of an audience itself in regards to dramaturgy is extremely vague. It could stem from anything consisting of friends, family members to even strangers. You see Pit, as you get deeper and deeper within the layers, it gets more personal. The final layer is where the person is the most comfortable being themselves. Believe it out not, we are all actors in a sense, isn't that fascinating?"

Even if Pit's interests didn't involve anything academic related, he still hung onto his brother's every word. Perhaps out of everyone the man knew, Crow was the only one who can manage to sway him into hearing about his classes. His brother's explanation was shortly interrupted by the sound of a rumbling stomach as it caused Pit to stare at him.

"Crow… you didn't eat after all, did you?" Pit shook his head in slight disappointment as he gave his twin a stern look for a split second before snapping his fingers. "I know! How about we get some subs on the way home? We could stop by your favorite place and even rent a movie nearby."

"Hey Pit-stain, has something gotten into you because you trying really hard to flatter me," Crow commented as he smirked at his older brother.

Pit smirked playfully back in response.

"So what if I am? Can't an older brother treat his little bro out once in a while?"

"Well, only if you manage to beat in at a race to the finish. In fact, let's begin…. Now!"

Before Pit could even reply, Crow darted off as the group of crows quickly flapped over to safety, some watching over him closely as if he was of their own kind. Pit was taken aback by the sudden action before shook his head before following Crow's direction in pursuit.

Rob stared at his criminology textbook which sat in front of him inside the living room, taunting him. The more he became glued to his studies, the further his brain slowly turned into mush from the influx of information coming in. He stared out the window and sighed, knowing he was forever bound to be stuck in the same measly metropolitan area, seeing the same ocean repeating its movements and be forever stuck with the same people day in and day out. Rob truly wanted change in his life yet he knew it would never happen. What was the point of even trying if he was bound to always be told that he was never good enough for anything.

He recalled growing up that it was always Robin this, Robin that, never Rob. It was always Robin, Robin, Robin and he for one, was sickened by it. To everyone else, his sister was the perfect role model as she got into her school of choice, has perfect grades and the world seems to adore her. Him on the other hand, is constantly told that he could do better, has to study his ass off to obtain the marks he wants and people don't notice that he even exists. As he began reminiscing about his failures, his cellphone vibrated as it caused him to jump before grabbing it off the table.

It turned out he received a message from Chrom.

"What does Chrom want now?"

He opened up the message as his jaw dropped, realizing that he promised to meet Chrom, Samus and Mac at the local pub. Part of him wanted to pretend he forgot while another part felt guilty if he ditched their preplanned obligation so with further notice, the man got up, grabbed his jacket and took off.

As he continued being engulfed by his own wallowing thoughts, Rob realized he wasn't paying any attention to where he was going. Before he knew it, the Plegian collided into someone as it caused him to flinch and get ready for the hoard of insults to be thrown his way.

"Rob… is that you?"

Perking up, his dark brown eyes met with a familiar pair of cerulean eyes. As he observed the man in front of him, Rob completely froze as he came face to face with none other than Shulk himself.

The campus was filled with endless chatter scattered throughout the schoolyard. The school year was almost over for the time being, let alone the final year for seniors. High school was a much happier time for Rob because back then he was not only naïve, but full of dreams and aspirations as well. Rob tried his best to partake in many activities as he can, let alone always kept his nose glued into his studies. He managed to keep up his tradition, even with the addition of having someone extremely special to him in his life.

Shulk at the time happened to be his beloved boyfriend, let alone his biggest supporter. He definitely made sure to make sure Rob never went off track in his academia furthermore, always celebrated his successes. The Homs knew Rob was aiming for one of the top schools for quality education to prove to his sister that he too, can strive for success. As the school year progressed, the more Rob became more elated as the teen was sure he was bound to get accepted at Harlington University. However reality suddenly crawled up as he realized if he does attend school overseas, how would his relationship with Shulk work? Would it continue to stay consistently strong or will their bond be torn apart, dwindling down into ashes.

Rob surely didn't want to their relationship to go sour so he decided it was for the best to end their fling on a positive note for the sake of his own education. One thing the fair haired man was truly thankful for was Shulk's patience and understanding of his own wants and needs. Compared to all of the others, the Homs was selfless and always put others before himself. Rob took out his phone, shooting Shulk a small text to meet him out in the courtyard.

Five minutes later, the blond arrived as the two moved towards a vacant area away from the public eye. The last thing they needed was for someone to start rumors based on mere observation or eavesdropping even. Both Rob and Shulk spent about a minute or two of their time in prolonged silence, unsure of their future for a slight moment before Rob finally decided to speak.

"*Shulk… It's come to my attention that I know I'll get accepted into Harlington. To be honest, I'm not sure how our relationship would work out long distance… you know?"*

Shulk drifted off into his own train of thoughts before nodding. He clearly understood where Rob was going at with this and actually, accepted his boyfriend's choice. The Homs didn't want to admit that he too feared how their relationship was going to develop while Rob studied abroad.

"*I understand," the Homs answered in a soft tone. "To be honest, I was on the same page. As much as I really enjoyed our time together I don't want to hold you back nor have us become enemies. So, I feel that ending our relationship now will be for the best. After all, that doesn't mean we're not friends anymore."*

"*Right…"*

Rob didn't want to admit, as much as he knew he needed to break things off with Shulk another part of him loathed the idea. He wished he could somehow take Shulk along with him yet Rob knew that was too good to be true.

"*So, I guess this is goodbye," Shulk dully stated with uncertainty*

"*Yeah… goodbye Shulk, I wish you the best of luck."*

"*The same can go for you as well."*

Before the two parted ways with one another, both boys embraced one another and locked lips for the final time. As Shulk went off to meet with Reyn, Rob just stood there with a dumbfounded look on his face and stretched out his right arm as if trying to reach for the Homs.

"*…I… love you…" he muttered.*

"Rob, I'm quite astonished to see you!" Shulk happily greeted. "It's been how many years now, three? How have you been?!"

The shorter man was thrown completely off guard by Shulk's mere presence. To admit, it was quite nostalgic seeing his ex-boyfriend again howbeit, Rob had a sinking feeling about this.

"I've been faring well enough," he simply answered, "and yourself?"

He exactly knew how this conversation was going to play out word by word as he forced himself to smile, trying to prevent Shulk from learning the truth.

"To admit, after high school, life was extremely rough at first, throwing every obstacle it can to tear me a new one. As it progressed, things started looking up for the better as I managed to land a job I like, you know, same old. In addition, Reyn joined the military after graduating while Fiora is currently studying overseas which reminds me, how are you currently doing in your studies Rob? What's it like being over at Harlington University? Are you visiting for the time being?"

The Homs continued interrogating him about the prestigious university of his dreams as Rob simply stared at Shulk, his mind drifting off into space. He tried his best to mentally request his pleas to Naga, wanting to drift off and take a new form. As much as Shulk's eagerness was quite adorable in the slightest, for some reason, the Plegian didn't want the Homs to see him. Wherever she vanished off to, Rob was certainly glad that Cynthia never stood around to see him in such a pathetic state. The man tried his best not to let his mask crumble, especially not in front of the blond he once loved dearly.

"…I have to go now."

With those words, Rob stormed off and startled the Homs. Shulk knew the white haired man was avoiding something yet he couldn't quite grasp what. As Shulk dwelled off into this own subconsciousness, it soon hit him.

Rob's application got declined from Harlington University.

Rob stepped into the bar as it appeared to be somewhat dead. It wasn't uncommon for pubs to be sparse during the day, let alone evening time as more people preferred going into the bar late at night. His eyes scanned the room for his friends as it turns out, they sat on the barstools near the bartender. Rob observed the bartender for a moment, noticing that the man had a dark complexion

let alone staggered greatly in height. His burly body made him look rather intimidating to the point where Rob even made the assumption that the man has probably engaged in a couple of battles. His shoulder length bistre hair appeared to be tied in a ponytail as he simply seemed to be engaged with a conversation with another man around his age. As he began speculating about these particular men, a blonde woman took note of his presence and tapped what appeared to be her boyfriend as she pointed in his direction.

"He's daydreaming again," Samus flatly informed him.

"Let me get his attention," Mac answered back. He glimpsed over in Rob's direction as the aspiring boxer cleared his throat.

"Hey Rob, how long are you going to stand there?"

"Oh, sorry about that," Rob dully replied.

Rob approached the group as he sat on the stool next to Chrom. The azure haired man ushered for the barkeep to give his friend a beer while Samus and Mac discussed Ridley's arrest. The Plegian observed the server once more now that he was able to capture a better look.

The bartender's nametag read Magnus as he filled Rob's drink. He also noticed how Rob's feet couldn't touch not only the ground, but the metal ring around the stool as well. Magnus smirked, finding it awfully amusing in the slightest.

Rob on the other hand, didn't notice his height brought unwanted attention. Instead, he was too focused on his encounter with Shulk, let alone thinking back on the time he personally got declined from his school of choice.

"*Hey dweeb," Robin taunted, "someone's on the phone for you. They say it's something about your college application."*

Instead of rebutting his sister's response with one of his usual comebacks, Rob jolted up from the couch and rushed over, hastily grabbing the phone off Robin's hands.

"*Hello?"*

"*Greetings Rob, it appears that my fellow colleague and I were so intrigued by your application that we will personally like to meet you."*

"*Really?! You mean it?! What time do you want me to be there by Mr.… Uh…"*

"*Hawthorne. Walhart Hawthorne, and as for meeting, any time you're available."*

"*Okay, I'll be there right away sir! Thank you so much Mr. Hawthorne, it was a pleasure speaking to you."*

Rob hung up as he pranced around the living room, receiving looks from Robin as he swiftly got ready to meet up with the heads for Harlington. His twin glanced at him in bewilderment as she tried her best to comprehend her brother's excitement. Before she even had the chance to pry on his business, Rob went out the door in a flash leaving Robin to shake her head and roll her eyes in response.

About twenty minutes later, Rob stepped inside Walhart's office as he was greeted by a shady looking redhead. A grin appeared to be plastered on his face as he held Rob's application in his hand as he fanned himself with it. Walhart told the teenager to take a seat while he let his colleague Gangrel take it from here.

"I'm sure you're oh so wondering why we called you over in the first place, am I correct?" he exclaimed. For some reason, his tone almost appeared to be mocking him as if he was going to be the bearer of grim news yet Rob's delusions managed to get the best of him.

"Of course!" Rob beamed.

His enthusiasm only caused both Gangrel and Walhart to exchange looks with one another. The two murmured a few inaudible words before turning back towards the boy's direction. Gangrel's smirk appeared once more, taunting Rob at every opportunity he could get.

"Well, you were quite the promising student however you aren't what we're looking for," Walhart bluntly stated. Rob's face expression dropped as he couldn't believe it.

"To add on, your grades were quite excellent but we honestly prefer people like your sister. If we had a male Plegian running amok on our campus, it would only hinder our ratings," Gangrel added.

"But… but…"

"But nothing! Rob, you have to face the facts. When you think you're good enough, there's always going to be people better than you. What I'm trying to say is, no matter how hard you try, someone's always going to be one step ahead. So if I were you, I'd just give up."

Rob just stood there and smiled, nodding as if he understood where the redhead was going with this. He tried his best not to let his mask crumble yet prior to his own knowledge, that's what Gangrel intended on doing. The man inched up closer to him and sneered, examining his body.

"Look at you," he exclaimed once more as he inched himself into Rob's personal bubble, "you're nothing more than a pathetic weakling. I know you're hiding behind a façade, there's no need to show me your performance boy. Look at that frail body of yours, it's lacking something interesting… It's not perfectly aligned nor were you born with intriguing features. In fact, you're flat… if only you had something more… round right here, then perhaps I'd reconsider."

Tears began building up in Rob's eyes as the young man was appalled by Gangrel's actions. He narrowed his gaze and frantically backed away and covered his chest. That in turn, only caused the devious man to chuckle as Walhart joined in as they found his misery to be quite entertaining.

"… Is he actually crying? I can't believe actually crying over this, it's quite a wonderful sight to see, don't you agree Mr. Hawthorne?"

Walhart smirked as he simply bobbed his head. The Plegian gritted his teeth and groaned before covering his mouth to suppress his discomfort.

Rob quickly got up and took off as Gangrel's laughter echoed throughout the building. At this point, he honestly felt like he had no reason to even be here anymore. What was the point of living if everything he poured his heart and soul into was never enough.

Luckily, Chrom happened to be wandering the city streets as he caught sight of a disgruntled Rob.

"Rob, is everything alright?"

Rob clutched onto Chrom as he wailed into his chest. He couldn't even gather the courage to even tell his best friend what happened, let alone feared Robin would mock him for having high hopes in the first place.

And to think his sea of woes were over. Rob couldn't help but noticed the man two stools away from him kept staring in his direction and mumbling something towards the bartender. He knew it was about him which made things even worse and to think he needed more on his plate.

"Hey kid," the man exclaimed. "Don't you think you're too young to be here?"

Rob rolled his eyes in response, finding his remark quite aggravating. "Um, if I wasn't of age, would I even be here right now?"

"Well," Magnus exclaimed, joining alongside one of his regulars, "then explain why your feet can't even touch the metal ring of the stool. And to think I seen short too…"

"Thank you for pointing my height out captain obvious," Rob barked.

Before Rob had the chance to even reply, Chrom managed to overhear their conversation and decided to aid his friend. Of course, he didn't know that doing this would only cause things to go sour.

"Hey!" Chrom exclaimed. "Can you two knock it off? He's already dealing with enough as it is and talking about his height only makes him feel worse."

The other brunet next to Magnus snickered. He honestly couldn't believe what he was seeing right now as he found it completely amusing.

"So, his height's a sensitive topic? If that were the case, I think your little friend here can speak for himself."

"While at it, he should know that real men defend themselves, not rely on their friends to do their bidding for them or, is he too much of a pathetic coward to even do so?"

Rob sighed in frustration as he looked away. Chrom noticed the tears building up in his eyes as his protective instincts kicked in however, the snow haired man ushered him not to say another word. He felt that the eyes of the other customers were prying towards them to see the lovely freak show which was currently in display. He noticed how Mac and Samus appeared to be in their own world, envying them as he too wished he could retreat anywhere that isn't in this damned hellhole of a town.

Chrom knew it was effortless to bicker on with the two older men so he focused on Rob whom seemed to have his head down. He could tell the other man was trying his best not to cry in public, let alone in front of the two strangers who taunted him so.

"Don't listen to them Rob," he assured him, "remember, no one else's opinion but yours matters, alright?"

Rob didn't respond. Instead, he tried his best to drift off into his own thoughts in hopes of finding a safe place. He truly envied children for their escapism as they weren't stuck in a world full of troubles. They were carefree and allowed to express their creativity whenever they pleased for the time being until they became of age or were stripped of their own innocence.

"Someone please get me out of this morbid place."

Rob tried his best to escape yet his attempts failed so he grabbed his mug and chugged it down, surprising both Magnus and the other man as it certainly managed to shut them up for the time being. A few seconds later, Rob had fallen asleep due to the sudden consumption of alcohol.

Lana eagerly hopped on her bed as Cia tucked her in. She leaned over, giving her joyous daughter a kiss on the cheek before making her way out of the child's bedroom.

"Goodnight Mommy!" she chirped, clutching tightly on her rabbit plush toy.

"Goodnight Lana," the woman flatly replied back.

As her mother turned around, Lana perked up a bit as she yearned for her mother's attention once more.

"Mommy?"

Her daughter's words caught Cia off-guard, causing her to slightly jump in place as she turned around as her eyes met with Lana's. She softly groaned a bit as she even wondered what her child wanted now as she recalled telling herself that children can certainly be so demanding sometimes.

"Yes sweetie?" she dully answered.

"…Can you read me a bedtime story?" Lana requested as be pouted a bit in response.

Cia took a deep breath before sighing. She figured that Lucina must have read to her every night while she worked late. She'd admit it was quite adorable yet at the same time, irritating. Because of it, Lana probably demands for a mere fairy tale or even one of Aesop's fables every night before she can be at ease and drift off into dreamland. The more she lingered on this particular subject, the further Cia concluded that it was only going to agitate her.

Somehow, the fair haired woman managed to stay calm in despite heavily disapproving of her daughter's request. So in response, Cia managed to quickly coin up an plausible excuse on whim.

"Sweetheart," she gently exclaimed, her tone filled with forced sweetness, "I'd love to but Mommy's awfully tired and need her beauty rest. Perhaps another time I'll read you a fairytale but right now, please, please try your best to obtain some shuteye."

Lana's face expression dimmed down as the young child glanced at her comforter before perking up at her mother. Thankfully the night appeared to be in Cia's favor as Lana appeared to be understanding of her mother's lack of sleep or at least to some extent.

"I love you Mommy."

"… I love you too, now please get some rest."

Cia turned off the light switch before shutting the door behind her. The woman walked through the corridor, slowly creaking the door to Lucina's room to see if the other girl was fast asleep. It appeared Lucina was out in a flash, resting her head alongside her pillow as Cia's lips curled.

"Lucy looks so graceful even when she's asleep. In fact, she almost resembles an antique porcelain doll with her elegance."

From there, Cia quietly shut Lucina's door as she made her way towards her bedroom and got on her queen sized bed. She lied in her bed, staring up at the ceiling fan as it swiftly moved in a circular motion, going clockwise. Something appeared to be bothering the half Homs as she grimaced from her own train of thought. One thing Cia had to admit was that she was quite astounded by how patient and understanding Lana was despite being a bundle of energy for her age. As she continued lingering into her own speculations, Cia realized that her daughter was almost the splitting image of *him*.

Lana was kind, optimistic, bright and full of innocence despite what was thrown her way. It surprised her mother very much howbeit, it also made Cia feel rather dreary in a sense that he will probably never get to see her.

Cia softly sighed as she shifted in bed, trying to get her mind off of him. He was forever gone out of her life and that was the end of their teenage love story. His departing gift consisted of a grand night she'll never cease to forget and dearly cherished yet that same evening, he managed to leave something special inside of her.

"*It's hopeless to think he'd ever come back… He's probably dead for all I know."*

She closed her eyes as she tried her best to forget Lana's father. After all, it wasn't like he knew he impregnated her anyways before his departure.

Cia looked around and noticed the interior of the apartment drastically transformed. Its once cream matted walls were now tattered and damaged, filled with holes and broken plaster. The charcoal couch was replaced with a worn out cushioned sofa with a giant tear on its left side as well as hordes of boxed messily stacked on top of one another. The woman glanced down just to see that her body transitioned along to match the scenery as she took form of her younger self.

She noticed her mother heading out as her boyfriend at the time sat on the armchair near the couch. His rough appearance made him look ominous but Cia figured that it was just the uneven patches of hair on his face.

"*(I'm going out to pick up some a few items. Make sure that despicable thing doesn't do anything stupid, alright?)" she strictly informed him.*

"*(Alright babe.)"*

As the vile witch took off, her boyfriend glanced at the newspaper for a moment before turning his head in Cia's direction. The young girl happened to be engrossed in a book, particularly one that told the many tales of the famed Hero of Legend. The ruthless man smacked his lips in complete ecstasy as he examined the little girl's fragile body. Despite it being sickly thin, her face was round and full of life regardless of her many attempts to pass off as a boy. He got up from his spot and began moving towards Cia.

"*(Hey Cynthia, why don't you come over here for a moment?)" he requested.*

Cia shook her head as she slowly backed away yet before she could even escape to the safety of her own bedroom, the man forcefully grabbed her small wrist and pulled her towards his direction. He stared her down as his right hand moved under her oversized t-shirt as he gently stroked her stomach.

The only thing Cia could do is whimper in response as tears began wielding up in her eyes.

"(What's the matter Cynthia? Afraid I'm going to hurt you? Well, don't be shy alright, I am just here to make everything better. You see, your mom is just desserts but the real prize is you darling.)"

From there, he proceeded to remove her shirt as it revealed her underdeveloped chest due to the young child being eight at the time. Cia's body had countless scars and bruises scattered throughout as most of it appeared to be on her back. She tried her best to cry for help but unfortunately, the young girl was in complete shellshock. The man eventually tore off her shorts and slowly removed her underwear until she was completely naked. Next, he unbuckled his belt and removed his pants and underwear as he revealed his genitals.

He towered over the cowering girl as his hands smoothly dancing alongside her chest as both of his thumbs stroked her non-existent breasts.

“(You can try to scream all you want child, but no one will ever hear your cries for help. After all, you’re nothing more than a dirtblood.)”

Cia heavily panted as she abruptly woke up from the alarming nightmare, no her own submerged memories she deeply kept locked away for excellent reasons. She felt her body temperatures gradually leap as it began becoming drenched with sweat almost due to her sudden panic. Her amethyst eyes scanned her surrounds as Cia gazed at the clock which simply informed her that it was two-thirty in the morning.

"*I could try to go back to bed however…"*

Deep down, Cia knew she hesitated to go back in complete fear that the dream will come up and ambush her once more so the snow haired woman felt it was best to stay up for a while. Cia got up from her bed and stepped doors the bedroom entrance and left. Everyone appeared to be sound asleep as she made her way towards the apartment patio. The half Homs placed her hand on the sliding door and pulled towards the right and stepped outside.

She plopped herself down on one of the wicker patio chair which faced towards the direction of the ocean. Cia observed the late night tide currently taking place from afar, being captivated by its aquamarine beauty. Just watching the currents perform their task was enough to put the bronze skinned woman's nerves at ease as she softly smiled. The ocean always brought nothing but pleasant memories to Cia ranging from her seashell collection to the time she met her first friend. It was rather unfortunate that she couldn't recall his name or even put a face on him.

Prior to Cia's own knowledge, her roommate happened to be up around this time to retrieve herself a glass of water. Lucina trotted towards the kitchen just to suddenly stop in her tracks as she noticed the other woman sitting outside alone.

"Cia…?"

It was rather unusual to see Cia up and about this time of the hour so Lucina couldn't help but pry for information. With further ado, the other girl opened up the sliding door and stepped outside to join Cia.

"Is everything alright?" questioned Lucina. She seemed to be heavily concerned about Cia's health lately, especially with the amount of hours she endured onto herself just to make ends meet.

"… Yeah, I just had a measly nightmare, nothing more," Cia simply replied.

"Care to talk about it?"

The snow haired woman paused for a moment before taking a deep breath. She looked away, avoiding eye contact with the other woman as she began recollecting her thoughts. Cia herself knew it was always the same nightmares reoccurring over and over again yet hesitated to mention or even speak of them. For the longest time, she believed silence was the answer however knew it would only become gradually worse over time.

Lucina gazed over in Cia's direction as she patiently awaiting her answer. Her avoidance was nothing new to the azure haired girl seeing how she knew Cia since sixth grade. She knew absolutely everything about Cia including her tactics and how she masked her emotions with an egotistical attitude.

"Lucina…?" Cia softly whispered.

"Yes?"

"Do you mind… if I um, sleep with you tonight?"

The other girl paused for a moment, taken a bit by surprise from her best friend's strange request. It wasn't the first time Cia requested to sleep with her nor was it going to be the last. Lucina took a moment to think, wondering how she should even answer her request. Should she say no, yes, maybe so? All were possible however, part of her missed sleeping alongside someone.

As the smaller girl put more thought into Cia's request, the more she remembered that it would be just like old times. Back then, the two girls were extremely inseparable as many of their fellow peers suspected them to be dating during their middle school years. Lucina knew her friend came from a broken home complete with an alcoholic mother and her trashy, deadbeat boyfriends which changed within the course of months. So, to help Cia escape from her abusive lifestyle, Lucina often arranged sleepovers at her house.

As Lucina was fast asleep, Cia wrapped her arms around the other girl as if she was her knight in shining armor. A small smile formed on her lips just to swiftly disappeared as the snow haired woman forgot one small detail.

If only she didn't have a boyfriend, then everything would have been perfect.

Chapter End Notes

> And that is done! I will admit, it was my first time writing rape and boy did I write it with a straight face. It's something I definitely don't ever encourage or condemn but this particular story is me experimenting with more darker themes(and of course, getting to the good stuff).
>
> The songs that inspired me to write this chapter consist of Beach House's "Other People" and The Radio Dept's "Messy Enough." I suggest checking those out if you like indie/dream pop or just curious to listen to them.
>
> Thankfully the next chapter is a lot more lighthearted in terms of mood but I do warn you now, the story will only continue to get dark from here. In the next chapter, possibly expect to see Link, Henry, Olivia and a few more other faces. Since I already wrote its planned layout(over 2k), I might end up breaking it up into two chapters depending on its length.
>
> Moonspeak - n. An offensive term used in regards to any confusing foreign language, especially Japanese or another East Asian language.
>
> Bovinor - latin word for brawl.(I'm so clever not)
>
> Race to the Finish - a bonus game in Classic Mode in Super Smash Brothers Melee. It is a timed dash to the end of a labyrinthine corridor with many doors along the way. There are also various obstacles one must overcome as it eventually splits into three ways.
>
> Dirtblood(forgot to define this last chapter) - a person with mixed blood worse than a

mutt.

As for the Shrek reference, well, I am not going to lie, that's how my Social Psych teacher described the Dramaturgical theory to our class. Of course, I tried not to laugh the entire time since you know, Shrek but overall, it was a clever analogy and certainly stuck with me enough to utilize it for this story. I condensed it down for this story because I recalled fully explaining all of the stages in a previous story(which isn't on here) and didn't want to reiterate the same information once more. I do love having to refresh myself about courses within my major.

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